

## LEC Hours & Contact:

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Room 11V

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE TITLE V LEARNING ENHANCEMENT CENTER

## WINNER OF THE NEWSLETTER NAMING CONTEST! BY CLARK SHAH-NELSON

Yasmine Alwan is very pleased to join the Learning Enhancement Center. A writer and an instructor, she has been teaching literature, creative writing, composition, and reading skills for seven years. She has attended Sarah Lawrence College, Oxford University, and Bard College and is now completing her second Master's degree in writing from NYU. In addition to her work at the LEC, she is a writer-in-residence in the NYC public schools with Teachers & Writers Collaborative and teaches composition at John Jay College, CUNY. Seeking to empower diverse individuals through personal expression, she has also facilitated writing projects in hospitals and prisons in New York and California.



Our new writing specialist,  
Yasmine Alwan

And the winner is... Deb McCue! Deb's suggestion of "Luminaria" took top honors in the Title V / LEC newsletter name-a-thon. Deb is the Director of Administrative and Student Information Systems (SIS). What's that you say? The SIS group oversees PowerCampus, IQweb for students, as well as financial aid, fiscal system integration with PowerCampus. You might have seen her around the office full of windows on the 14th floor that looks a bit like, and is appropriately called, "The Fishbowl."

Deb doesn't work with our students directly but works with people who work with the students to help them deliver services efficiently. This includes gathering data and analyzing it to be more effective as well as empowering different user communities to access and use these data. Her team helps institutional research understand who our students are and make registration process more seamless. Does she have advice for students? Take advantage of the tools that are given to you (IQweb!) – they give you access to information and allow you to be part of the technology conversation. It will save you time. You can see the same information that they see at the bursar or admissions offices so you know what is needed.

As for the name, Luminaria, Deb looked up "enhancement" in the thesaurus which led to illumination. She then thought of Title V



Deb McCue, Director of SIS

Director William Bird-Forteza's joyfulness, and luminaria came out of that. It is also a reference to "luminaries," which are used in celebrations in the American Southwest.

According to the wikipedia:

"A **luminaria** or **farolito** is a light, typically displayed during the holiday season, that features a brown paper bag weighted down with sand and illuminated from within by a lit candle.

These are typically arranged in rows to create large and elaborate displays."

The Wikipedia article also gives a link on how to make your own luminarias:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luminaria>



When you see Deb around the building, take a chance to have a chat! I could fill you in on her interesting family and past but I'll leave that to you!

## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR BY WILLIAM BIRD-FORTEZA



The Title V/ Learning Enhancement Center project continues to grow. Implementation has begun for a second Title V Project, a Coop Grant with Vaughn College of Aeronautics, designed to create a pathway for students who wish to become licensed secondary education mathematics teachers.

We are now preparing the Annual Performance Report to the U.S. Department of Education, our funding source. Usually, the first year is spent primarily creating an infrastructure for these projects. In our case, this infrastructure was established early on, a truly impressive achievement.

Our Learning Enhancement Center is fully operational, staffed, equipped, and utilized. The data

collected is very encouraging, sponsored faculty projects are shaping up very well, and our reputation among students and faculty has been clearly established.

I would like to acknowledge the hard work and professionalism of the Title V/LEC staff. As Director, I feel blessed to have such a competent and dedicated team to work with.

## COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS AT THE LEC

BY DR. JAYA KANNAN

A collaborative endeavour between the LEC and the Admissions department has involved the planning of workshops to assist students who may benefit from a refresher activity in math and writing to succeed in the Accuplacer admissions exam. Our writing and math specialists at the LEC have designed a 2 hour hands-on workshop for each area that provides a review of basic concepts with follow-up tasks that help practice the skills learnt. In addition, it also gives tips that are beneficial

We see LEC's role as useful in providing academic support to the Admissions department. So far, we have delivered two workshops this semester and the next one is scheduled for the last week of November.

The major part of our work continues to focus on providing one-on-one assistance to MCNY students and creating a learning environment suitable for the development of independent learning.



Jaya Kannan,  
Coordinator, LEC

## HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR SESSIONS

BY LAUREN CARDON

Dear Students:

We at the LEC want to help you improve your writing in all areas, and during our tutorial sessions, we attempt to determine in what areas you need the most assistance.

However, you may need to work on one specific area for a class you're currently taking, or your instructor might have asked you to visit us because of a particular concern he or she has with your writing. The best way to help us help you is to give us as much information as possible.



Lauren Cardon, Writing Specialist

Here are some tips for how to utilize our services at the LEC:

- Don't wait until the last minute to schedule an appointment. We want to help as many students as possible, but we do fill slots very quickly. Try to schedule with us a week in advance; you're more likely to

get the time slot that best fits your schedule.

- Come in on time. We allot a maximum of one hour for appointments, so if you come in late, you're cutting into your appointment time.
- If you can't make an appointment, please call and cancel. You will a) be able to reschedule for a more convenient time for you, and b) allow someone else who really needs a last-minute appointment the opportunity to come in that day.
- If your instructor has asked you to visit us, tell us why. If he or she has written

comments on an assignment and requested you visit the LEC, bring in the comments.

- For writing: bring in any assignments you are working on (as long as you are allowed to receive help on them). We can help with brainstorming, outlining, writing, and revising.
- Please, ask questions! We try to be as informative as possible, but the more you help us understand your learning goals, the better we can assist you in achieving them.

This is the solution to last issue's problem: Sugar represents 20% of the cake!

Those of you who answered correctly, good for you! If you had trouble, stop by the LEC and we can show you how to master problems like these.

Here is a math problem that is a part of every day life. Challenge yourself by doing this problem

### Math Corner Challenge!

As you know, many students will graduate from Metropolitan College very soon. They will get jobs paying a lot of money. The first thing that they might want to do is to buy a house. Lisa went along with a real estate broker to look at a house in Queens. Lisa likes the house very much and wants to buy it. The value of the house is \$450,000, so Lisa decides to put a down payment of 30% of the value. What is the amount of her down payment?

*Answer will be revealed in the next issue, but you can drop by LEC anytime to submit yours!*



Barrington Scott, Math Specialist

## THE BURNED-OUT STUDENTS' GUIDE TO WRITING

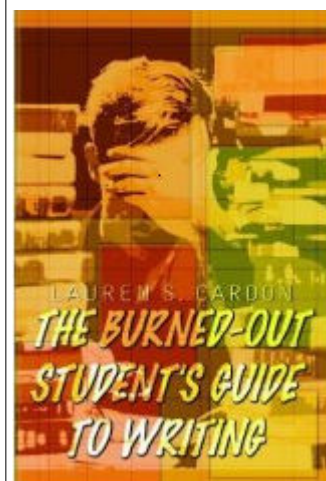
### BY LAUREN CARDON

Lauren Cardon's *The Burned-Out Student's Guide to Writing* is a book which breaks down the writing process into a series of manageable, comprehensive steps.

The book can be used both as a teaching tool and as a supplementary resource for students (high school and college) who need help in any of

the following areas: interpreting a writing assignment; brainstorming; constructing an outline; writing a thesis paragraph; composing a rough draft; revising; and other parts of the writing process. In addition, the guide provides clear, concrete examples of stylistic problems and demonstrates how to identify and resolve these

problems. Cardon shows how to improve a paper stylistically and organizationally, how to avoid common mechanical errors, and how to construct and develop a solid, clear argument. Her approach aims to minimize the stress a student experiences when initiating and developing a paper by zoning in on one aspect of the paper-writing process at a time.



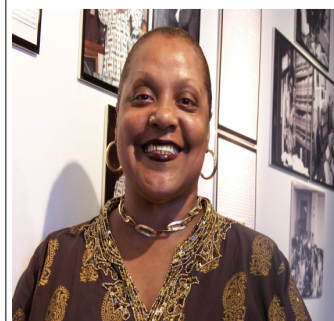
## STUDENT PERSPECTIVES

### BY JACQUELINE LOPEZ

The LEC is proud to feature our Student of the Month, Jacqueline Lopez. Jacqueline has been visiting both a math tutor, Lisa, and a writing tutor, Lauren, on a weekly basis since the beginning of the fall semester. She has demonstrated a strong commitment to improving both her math and writing skills, and her dedication has been reflected in her work.

Jacqueline has found her experience at the LEC to be beneficial in terms of both her self-confidence as a student and her academic progress: "The block that I suffer in writing, and especially in math, is slowly breaking down with the support that I am receiving at the lab, through the help I've

been receiving from the writing and math teachers. I am so very grateful and I am not ashamed to say I really need their support and help. Now I am feeling really comfortable in writing and also learning to do math without feeling ashamed," she says of her experience working with the LEC tutors



## MENTAL CALISTHENICS

### BY LARRY LUTSKY

There is growing evidence that people who regularly engage in mentally challenging activities such as playing board games and solving puzzles can reduce their risk of memory loss and dementia as they age. Mental exercise can even prevent or slow the progression of Alzheimer's disease. The good news is that mental exercises can be

fun and relaxing. Many people enjoy doing the crossword puzzles in the local newspaper. Another popular puzzle is Sudoku, a Japanese number game that can be found in many newspapers and on the internet at [www.sudoku.com](http://www.sudoku.com). Other ways of keeping your mind sharp include learning a new computer program, play-

ing challenging computer games such as Nintendo, building your own website, or joining a discussion group with your classmates. These activities will make you a more interesting person and keep your mind toned the way physical exercise keeps your muscles toned. The bottom line is to keep learning new things throughout the lifetime.



Larry Lutsky,  
Research Analyst



Check out our wiki!  
[lecmetropolitan.wikispaces.com](http://lecmetropolitan.wikispaces.com)

#### Handy Links:

<http://iqmail.mcny.edu>  
<http://iqweb.mcny.edu>  
<http://blackboard.mcny.edu>

The MCNY Department of Online Learning  
and the Title V/Learning Enhancement  
Center present:



BlackBoard symposium...

BLACKBOARD @ MCNY 2006

## A Symposium for Teaching and Learning Using Blackboard

December 1, 2006

room 11J  
1:00 p.m.

Refreshments  
served,  
please RSVP to  
Lynn Sally, Chair:  
[lsally@mcny.edu](mailto:lsally@mcny.edu)

## WORKSHOP ON LEARNING OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT BY WILLIAM BIRD-FORTEZA

Monday, October 23, 2006  
marked a very special event sponsored by the Title V/ Learning Enhancement Center: **The First Invitational Workshop on Learning Outcomes Assessment**, led by Dr. Barbara Sjoström, a nationally recognized authority on outcomes assessment who is Professor of Education at Rowan University.

A representative group of part- and full-time faculty who teach Constructive Action, in addition to the Director of the Mentoring Program and staff of the LEC, participated in this workshop. The presenter covered the following areas:

1) Overview of learning outcomes

assessment principles and strategies used in higher education with an emphasis on assessment questions for the MCNY community and the College's Constructive Action;

2) The assessment plan development process and the relationship to planning, budgeting, program review, accreditation, and timelines for process and products;

3) Selection of appropriate models for MCNY that are curriculum-embedded at course, program, and institutional levels;

4) Identification, selection, and development of measurement tools that include norm- and criterion-referenced instruments, per-

formance-based activities, portfolios, critical reflection, and rubrics for scoring; and 5) Reporting process and uses of data for revision of pedagogy and for setting faculty renewal/development agendas.

A second invitational workshop is planned for the Spring term, together with a special hands-on session on the development and use of signature assignments for multi-session, multi-instructor, required courses.

## THINKING MATHEMATICALLY: COMMUNICATING WITH NUMBERS

BY LISA BAUER

As a math tutor, it is essentially my job to help the students of MCNY improve their math study habits and performance in their math classes. However, the unspoken job responsibilities tend to include helping students overcome their fears of math (and yes, nearly everyone has them to varying extents), demonstrating the utility of mathematics in their given field of study/employment, and clarifying what it truly means to be mathematically literate or 'numerate'.

Often people resent learning mathematics (or taking a math class) because they do not see the importance of learning the

concepts or the use of these skills beyond passing their coursework.

Being numerate tends to be defined in the rather ambiguous term like *comprehending mathematics*, or *feeling comfortable with numbers*. I believe that possessing math skills allows the individual to think clearly and critically and to communicate effectively.

I often discuss the following example about how numbers are a very effective means of communication with my students. Imagine you are trying to demonstrate the need for funding in a commu-

nity plagued by alcoholism. You present that "most children of alcoholic parents suffer academically and psychologically". However, the word "most" is subjective, and could mean different things to different people.

Let's examine what that sentence would look like with numerical information: "78% of the children of alcoholics...". In the second example, there is no debate or ambiguity. Replacing "most" with "78%" helps the reader gain a clearer understanding of what is being said, leaving nothing subject to interpretation.

## FAREWELL TO DESIRÉE AND CLARK

It is with deep regret that we say farewell to Clark Shah-Nelson and Desirée Evans, two good friends and co-workers. Both of them nurtured the LEC during the first months of its life and provided crucial assistance to everyone who came to them

for help. Desirée's profound understanding of the beginning writers' needs, her clear presentation of problems to be solved, and her radiant smile will be missed by all.

Clark's technological expertise, his willingness to share

his knowledge with others, and his playful sense of humor also will be remembered despite his absence. Desirée has accepted a job at Fordham University, and Clark and his wife are expecting a baby and moving Upstate. All of us feel truly grateful to have known such amazing people and wish them well in their future work.